

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

*Oedalea ringdahli* Chvála (Diptera: Hybotidae) new to Britain.—On 13.vi.1984 near Altnabreac, Loch Achilty, East Ross (O.S. grid ref. NH 427569) I swept a single male *Oedalea* which I immediately recognized as being different from the seven previously recorded British species of this genus on account of the almost uniformly black legs. The fly was caught beside a shaded stream under predominantly birch woodland. Despite intensive searching of the area in the vicinity of this capture, no more examples of this distinctive species could be found. Consulting the excellent volume in the *Fauna Entomologica Scandinavica* series by Chvála (1983) that evening soon established the identity of the addition to our fauna as *Oedalea ringdahli* Chvála. This species was described as new by Chvála (1983) from the holotype male collected by Ringdahl at Umfors, Lycksele Lappmark, Sweden on 20.vi.1937. This was the only specimen which had been seen by Chvála at the time he described the species.

Chvála (1983, p. 179) mentions the existence of two dark-legged specimens of *Oedalea holmgreni* Zett., referred to by Collin (1961, p. 293), and suggests that these may in fact be *O. ringdahli*. Through the kind assistance of Mr Adrian Pont (formerly of the Diptera section, British Museum (Natural History)) I have been able to examine the male from Cusop Dingle, Herefordshire, 16.vi.1914 (*leg.* J. H. Wood) which is housed in the Natural History Museum (NHM) British Diptera collection. The specimen bears a label in Collin's handwriting "*Oe. holmgreni var.*" which confirms that he examined this specimen. Careful comparison of the male from Cusop Dingle with the male from Altnabreac indicates that they are conspecific. The antennae are identical, both individuals have the anterior part of the notopleural depression polished (this is grey-dusted in *O. holmgreni*) and the pattern of leg coloration is the same, though the dark areas on the legs of the older specimen have apparently faded slightly. The male from Altnabreac is side-pinned and the characteristic pair of strong pre-scutellar dorsocentral (dc) bristles are readily visible in consequence (though the right dc is longer and stronger than the left). The male from Cusop Dingle is pinned vertically in the traditional British manner and as a result the area of the thorax in front of the scutellum is obscured and the dc cannot be seen.

I have not been able to trace the second male mentioned by Collin (1961, p. 293) from Harpenden, Hertfordshire, 22.vi.1950 (*leg.* B. R. Laurence) which is apparently not present in the NHM collections.—I. F. G. McLean, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA.

## REFERENCES

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 Collin, J. E. 1961. *British flies. 6. Empididae*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**A further record of *Oedalea ringdahli* Chvála (Diptera: Hybotidae) in Britain.**—Whilst identifying Diptera collected by malaise trap which had been operated in the Black Wood of Rannoch, Perth and Kinross District, Tayside Region, Scotland, (grid ref. NN5655) I came across a single male *Oedalea* which was markedly darker than usual. It differed from all the other *Oedalea* species with which I was familiar in having all the femora and tibiae extensively darkened. The specimen keyed out in Chvála (1983) to *O. ringdahli* Chvála. Chvála states that at that time *O. ringdahli* was only

known from the holotype which was taken in the mountains about 10 Km north of Tarna in northern Sweden. He concludes that it is a northern, rather mountainous species. As this appeared to be a rare and little known species in Europe I sent the specimen to Dr Chvála who kindly confirmed the identification. He also informed me that *O. ringdahli* has also been found at Vastmanland in southern Sweden by A. C. Pont and in Norway by T. Jonassen. *O. ringdahli* has previously been regarded mainly as a Scandinavian species so its appearance in the Scottish Highlands is perhaps not too surprising as there are other woodland empid species such as *Tachypeza truncorum* (Fall.) which show a similar distribution (MacGowan, 1986).

The malaise trap in the Black Wood of Rannoch was situated at an altitude of 250 m on a gently north facing slope. The trap was sited within the native Caledonian pinewood, the canopy being dominated by large, mature Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.) with occasional birch (*Betula* sp.). The ground flora was almost entirely dominated by *Calluna vulgaris* L. The trap was emptied on the last day of each month, the *O. ringdahli* specimen being taken in the July sample. Other members of the same genus taken in the Rannoch trap included *O. stigmatella* Zett., (two females) and *O. zetterstedti* Collin, (two males, five females). I have taken both of these species previously in malaise traps operated in native pinewoods with *O. zetterstedti* being the most widely distributed. Both species tend to be more common in the drier and eastern pinewoods rather than in the west. Perhaps the most important factor influencing the capture of all the *Oedalea* species was the presence some 10 m from the trap of a large dead, fallen Scots pine. Several authors have reported rearing the larvae of *Oedalea* from dead wood in the past (Collin, 1961).

In Norway *O. ringdahli* would appear to be not uncommon on the west coast. Specimens have been taken in the lower branches of a large Norway spruce (*Picea abies* L.), in clearings in deciduous forests, in a garden and at the edge of a swampy forest. The only factor which these sites had in common was the presence of rotting wood. Its apparent rarity may well be due to the fact that this species has a short flight period (T. Jonassen, pers. comm.).

Chvála (1983) makes a note in his description of *O. ringdahli* that the two dark specimens of *O. holmgreni* referred to by Collin (1961) from England may in fact refer to specimens of *O. ringdahli*. One of these specimens was taken by J. H. Wood at Cusop Dingle in Hertfordshire on 16.vi.1914 (see McLean, 1991) with another similar specimen being taken by B. R. Laurence at Rothamsted also in Hertfordshire on 22.v.1950. I have contacted Dr Laurence regarding his specimen but the individual may have been preserved in alcohol with many other specimens and cannot be traced at this time. The specimen was taken resting on a leaf in a hedgerow. The confirmation by McLean (1991) that the Cusop Dingle specimen is indeed *O. ringdahli* must greatly increase the probability that the Rothamsted specimen also belonged to the same species.

I thank M. Chvála, B. R. Laurence, T. Jonassen and I. F. G. McLean for their assistance in the preparation of this note.—Iain MacGowan, Nature Conservancy Council, 9 Culduthel Road, Inverness IV2 4AG.

#### REFERENCES

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